

## A Successful Mistake by rosekings

**Category:** Stranger Things (TV 2016)

**Genre:** AU, Alternate Universe - Modern Setting, Blind Date, But I needed this, F/M, First Dates, First Kiss, Fluff, I NEEDED THIS, One-Shot, also el and max are roommates!!!, i know you don't usually have your first kiss on your first date, mike is a DORK and el is SMITTEN, quietly slipping my stoncy references in there, throwing massive shade at the girl who rejected dustin at the snowball

**Language:** English

**Characters:** Dustin Henderson, Eleven (Stranger Things), Lucas Sinclair, Maxine "Max" Mayfield, Mike Wheeler, Will Byers

**Relationships:** Eleven/Mike Wheeler

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**Summary:**

El is working as a waitress on the same night that Mike comes in with an absolutely horrible blind date. Once they get through the terrible evening, however, Mike and El go on a date of their own.

# 1. Excuse Me

## Author's Note:

- Inspired by [blind date](#) by [reddieforlove](#).

reddieforlove wrote an adorable piece of Mileven fluff wherein Mike is a waiter and El is a girl on a bad blind date, and they gave me the go-ahead to write a piece based on the opposite: Mike's on the date and El's the waiter!

*“Shit!”*

“Lucas, you’re going to get us both fired if you keep running your mouth.” El double-checks the latest ticket and then slides two glasses under the taps.

“I’m not running my mouth, I’m using it for emphasis,” Lucas protests, hastily cleaning up his spilled glass. He tosses the napkins towards the trash and misses, swearing loudly again. El shakes her head, grinning.

“El, your burgers are done!” Dustin yells. El grabs the plates, loads them onto a tray, adds the drinks, and slips out from the kitchen. The Rock Bar and Restaurant is packed full of loud brutes and their petite blonde dates tonight. Someone thought it was a good idea to put the football game up on every single TV, so the volume is ten times higher than El is used to. But she gets paid to put up with the yelling at the bar and the whining kids back in Lucas’s section, and the tips stack up to a decent amount, too.

After El deposits the food at a table holding four women who look like they came straight from church, she moves to the latest table in her section, a two-top that Will had just seated. On the right is a stick-thin girl with her posture stiff as a board and her auburn hair pulled up so tight El can actually feel the pain. Across the table sits her date, a guy with thick black hair, and absolutely gorgeous chocolate-colored eyes, and a soft smattering of freckles across his nose, and long, thin fingers that he’s tapping against the table’s

surface, and –

“Um, excuse me?”

El shoots back to reality, forcing her eyes away from the beautiful boy and onto the girl. Her nose is upturned, as if the place has an odor she'd rather not smell (it probably does, if El is being honest), and she does *not* look comfortable. El pities the boy across from her as she hands them both menus. “Hey. I’m El, I’ll be serving you this evening. Can I get you guys started with drinks?”

“Diet Coke, please, Belle. I’m trying to watch my figure,” the girl adds unnecessarily. “Mike?”

El turns to Mike, who has now made eye contact with her. He gives her an apologetic smile and her stomach decides to do backflips. His eyes really *are* gorgeous. *Not helpful*, she chides herself.

“Yeah, um, I’ll just have a Corona, thanks.”

El nods, not knowing what the hell a Corona is, and manages to leave the table before she says something that will make her look like a complete fool. She heads to the bar, where her best friend Max is working, serving a dozen motorcycle gang members who are yelling at the TV.

“Hey, can I get...whatever a Corona is?” she asks, squeezing into the bar.

“Still not in the loop with all the drinks?” Max says, grinning. She pulls a bottle out from under the counter and after popping off the top, she hands it to El.

“Thanks.”

“Noticed you got a little star-struck at your new table.”

El looks back towards the table where Mike and his date are sitting. Neither of them look happy – the girl is waving her hands around, clearly off on a rant, and Mike is trying to sink into his own skin while occasionally nodding his head in absent agreement.

“No – it’s not – he was just cute.”

“More than cute, I’d say. Your cheeks look like my goddamn hair, El,” Max says, refilling several glasses at once.

“Shut up.”

“Just sayin’.”

“His date looks absolutely horrible.”

Max glances over, nodding her head. “Yeah, she does. Have fun with those two.”

El sighs and heads back to the table. She quickly hands them their drinks, lets them know she’ll be back in a few to take their orders, and vacates the area all in six seconds. When she leaves, she hears Mike start to say something, but the girl cuts him off, clearly only wanting to talk about whatever topic is at the top of her priority list.

“Will, I hate you forever,” El says as she passes the front of the restaurant where Will is helping seat people. Will glances in the direction El just came from and shrugs.

“Sorry – it was the only table. If it makes you feel better, I hate me too.”

El snickers and heads off to make the rest of her rounds. When she comes back to Mike’s table, the girl is still ranting. Mike looks at El and his shoulders lift, visibly relieved to have an interruption in his date’s monologue. El pulls out her notepad, giving Mike a smile and struggling to maintain it when she turns her eyes to the girl.

“Ready to – um –“

The girl is *not* stopping her one-sided conversation about the price of clothes in the mall’s new department store.

“Hey, Stacy – Stacy – we’re going to order,” Mike says. The girl abruptly stops and fixes El with a death stare. *Jesus Christ*, El thinks. *What the hell did I do to deserve this girl?*

“Oh. Right. I’ll have the salmon, then. Well-done, two lemons, and do *not* over-do it with the vegetables. Mike, you might want the same thing – you look a little chubby in the cheeks.”

*He most absolutely does not*, El thinks but doesn’t say.

“I’m allergic to salmon, actually.” He glances over his menu, then fixes El with his full attention. El forces herself not to blush – why does she *always* blush over the dumbest stuff? “Can I have the grilled chicken?”

“Of course. The dinner or side portion?”

“Mike, honestly,” Stacy interrupts in that pretentious voice of hers, taking a sip from her glass, “The side portion could help you with –“

“Yes, the dinner portion, El,” Mike says firmly. El’s breath hitches when he says her name, and she swallows, nodding.

“Sure. No problem. Do you guys want an appetizer?”

“God, would you just leave us alone for *ten minutes*, Belle?” Stacy says irritably. “Seriously, we’re trying to have a conversation here.”

El freezes, body surging with embarrassment, anger, and an urge to snap at the girl. She’s about to open her mouth when Mike subtly shakes his head at her, his face a picture of sympathy for her and horror for his date. Somehow, she can tell what he’s saying with his eyes: *Don’t bother – she’s not worth it*. Then he’s gone, back to looking at his menu. “Yeah, let’s have the calamari as an appetizer.”

“Of course,” El says, taking a deep breath and trying to keep her mouth from calling Stacy a few choice words to her face. “I’ll get you two some more drinks as well.”

“Thanks, El.”

El nods and, grabbing their menus, heads back to the kitchen.

“That girl is a *bitch!*” El exclaims, slapping her tray onto the kitchen counter. Dustin laughs, dropping the soon-to-be calamari appetizer into the fryer once El gives him the order. Lucas comes in behind El,

eyebrows raised.

“Wasn’t someone telling me to watch my mouth twenty minutes ago?”

“I don’t care,” El says, furiously grabbing new glasses to refill Mike and Stacy’s drinks. “I hate her.”

“Yeah, but you like the guy, right?” Dustin asks, white chef’s hat falling off his head.

“How do you know that?”

“Max couldn’t keep a secret if her life depended on it,” Lucas says.

El silently fumes as she puts off returning their drinks and appetizer for as long as possible. A few times, she glances out the cut-through to see Mike looking eternally uncomfortable with his date’s behavior. Stacy is still talking, and at one point, she picks up her empty glass and slams it back down on the table, turning to yell something at Mike as though it’s his fault. El suddenly feels bad and picks up their drinks and calamari, hustling it out the door towards their table.

Right before she gets there, right before either of them see her, she catches on to their conversation and it fills her with more hate than she’s getting paid to withstand.

“- she’s like a sloth, and can you *believe* that hairdo? I don’t know how on *earth* she got the job here – her attitude is absolute shit –“ Stacy is saying. Mike shoots to his feet, sending his napkin flying.

“You know what, Stacy? I think *your* attitude is absolute shit. She’s doing her job, and you’re making it impossible! I don’t even know *why* I agreed to this! You can pay for your own half. I’m out of here.”

Mike drops several bills onto the table and promptly leaves the restaurant, not even seeing El amidst the crowd of loud football-watchers. Stacy huffs, getting to her feet and clawing through her delicate purse. As she pulls out some money, she catches sight of El, her face morphing into the epitome of rage and annoyance.

“This is your fault, you lazy bitch.” Stacy throws the bills at her and

El's jaw drops.

If El wasn't holding a tray full of food and drinks, and if Max wasn't right behind her watching the whole thing, ready to restrain her, Stacy would be an unconscious heap on the floor and El would be a broke and unemployed 21-year-old. Even so, as Stacy storms out of the restaurant, El is seriously debating putting her tray down and going after her.

"Wow." Max bends down next to El, picking up the bills that fluttered to the floor and the ones on the table. Everyone else in the restaurant is completely unaware of what just happened, all of them totally focused on the game. "You should've kicked her ass, job on the line or not."

"Yeah. I should've." El sighs, taking the bills from Max and heading back to the kitchen to cancel their food order. She vaguely wonders how Mike got into that situation – was it a blind date? Abusive girlfriend? El has no idea, but she grins when she remembers how Mike stood up for her and then stormed out of there. *That girl definitely deserved it*, she thinks.

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The restaurant finally starts to empty out towards the end of El's shift an hour later. She's leaning against the inside of the bar, watching Max work and taking a well-deserved drink of something (probably alcoholic) that Max mixed up for her.

"Hey – El – check it out," Max says, nudging her. El turns around, tongue turning to lead as she sees black-haired, sweater-wearing Mike walking straight at her. He squeezes in between two guys that have had way too many drinks and slides a twenty dollar bill across the bar to her.

"For whatever Stacy didn't cover, and for your tip," he says. He runs a hand through his hair and looks at her with sympathy and apology in his eyes. "Look, El, I'm so, so sorry for Stacy. She was a blind date that some dumb friend of mine arranged. I can't believe she said that stuff."

"It's, uh –" El swallows and shakes her head, forcing her mind to

properly enunciate as she sets her drink aside. "It's fine. I mean, I'm sure I've dealt with worse."

"Maybe. She's pretty bad, though."

El shrugs. "I don't know who's worse – her, or the guy that set you up with her."

Mike laughs, nodding his head. "Troy's an asshole, that's for sure. At the end there, I was wishing it was *you* sitting across the table. Then at least there could've been some good conversation and a chance to actually eat."

Mike freezes, and El can feel the red spreading across her face as she watches Mike realize what he just said.

"I – I mean – that's not – I was just saying, *theoretically* –"

"No, I get it. I mean, not to sound stuck-up or anything, but I think I could do better than Stacy, too," El says, grinning despite her burning cheeks.

"Well, yeah – yeah, definitely – I mean –" Mike stutters. All El can think is how adorable he looks right then. In a bold move spurred by her residual anger at Stacy, El grabs his hand and the pen from her apron pocket and scribbles her number on his palm.

"Keep this," she says, pushing his twenty back towards him as she replaces her pen. "Save it for next weekend."

He opens and closes his mouth several times, searching for something to say in response, before finally settling on, "Yeah. Okay. Sounds great, El." He smiles at her and it fills her with a warm fuzz from her head to her toes. He pockets his bill and leaves the restaurant for (hopefully) the last time that night.

"You sure you don't want me to go after that girl?" Max asks, downing the rest of El's drink as El watches Mike go. "'Cause I will. I'll chase her down and kick her into the concrete."

El shakes her head. All her anger at Stacy is gone, replaced with excitement and a little bit of *did that really just happen?* The image of



Mike and his dorky smile is fresh in her mind as she slides her glass to Max. “Get me another drink, would you? I’ve got a date next weekend.”

## 2. Quadrantids

### Notes for the Chapter:

Because everyone loved the first chapter so much, I wrote a second in honor of the meteor shower tomorrow - El and Mike go on their date! Thanks for reading and commenting, I appreciate all of it!

“Max!”

No response. El leans out of the closet, glancing around the dorm. Max still hasn't returned from wherever she hurried off to twenty minutes ago. As much as El would love to be courteous to her roommate's mysterious outings, she has bigger fish to fry at the moment.

“*Max!*”

El's roommate smashes through the door of their dorm, breathing heavy. She pushes her orangey hair away from her face and looks at El expectantly.

“Where have *you* been?” El demands.

“I asked Lucas out,” Max responds, still recovering her breath. El shrieks, jumping over the piles of clothes on the ground to envelop Max in a hug.

“How? When? What'd he say?” El asks once she's backed off. Max sits down on her bed, fiddling with the hem of her shirt.

“Um – well, he was definitely surprised – but I'm pretty sure he said yes – I was freaking out and I bolted as soon as he gave me an answer.”

“That's great, Max! I'm so happy for you.” El turns back to the tiny closet, facing a wide array of clothing options for that night. “But on another note, I don't know what to wear.”

“Ohhh, you have your date with the black-haired guy tonight, right?

Dorky, wore that hideous sweater that one time, brought the blonde who threw money in your face?”

El laughs, the memory resurfacing vividly. Last weekend’s fiasco with Mike and his blind date definitely hadn’t been funny at the time but it had introduced her to Mike and gotten her a date, so she supposes that makes up for it. “That’s the one. But I have *no idea* where we’re going.” After pushing aside a few more hangers and shoeboxes, she gives up and drops down into a pile of Max’s shirts.

Max scrunches up her nose. “He didn’t tell you?”

“No. He called me the day after his blind date, asked if today was good, and told me he’d pick me up at the edge of campus tonight at eight. We haven’t talked since.” It’s a bit disappointing, really, that they haven’t spoken at all. But El tries not to feel too discouraged – over-the-phone conversation with someone she’s met once would probably be awkward, anyways.

“How the hell are you supposed to plan on what to wear if you don’t know what you’re doing?” Max leans off the edge of her bed to snag one of her textbooks. She opens it to the middle, stares at it for a moment, and then slams her head back onto her pillow with a grunt of frustration.

“Beats me. By the way, why did you even pick Astronomy?”

“I like the stars; they remind me of California. But what I *don’t* like is this essay due the day after tomorrow.”

“Your funeral,” El says. She looks at her watch: fifteen past seven. “I guess I’d better just pick something out – he would’ve told me if I had to wear something particular, right?”

“Yeah.” Max moves from her bed to her desk at the pace of a sloth and opens her textbook with a heavy sigh. “Have fun on your date. I’ll just be sitting here, wasting away, clawing my eyes out as I try to write this paper.”

El laughs, getting to her feet and diving back into the depths of the closet.

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Forty-five minutes later, El stands under the lamppost at the corner of campus, wearing her favorite overall-shorts with a light pink shirt, her deeply worn white Converse, and a flannel jacket. She didn't bother messing with her wild brown curls – they basically have a mind of their own – and went light on the makeup. She fretted about dressing up a bit more, but Max told her that if Mike didn't like her at her most comfortable, he didn't deserve to go out with her. So El wore what she liked and arrived at the lamppost at eight on the dot.

But the minutes are ticking by. She starts pacing beneath the yellow-orange light, glancing at her watch as it goes from 8:02 to 8:07 to 8:13. The road next to her stays empty and dark, the only sound the distant cars on the highway.

Each minute goes by slower than the last. Mike had seemed so genuine, but Max always says that naivety is El's worst trait. *I guess I'm getting stood up*, El thinks with a sigh. Once her watch reads 8:20, she starts to walk back across the green to her dorm building, disappointment heavy in her stomach.

"El! El!"

She spins around to see Mike leaning across the passenger seat of an ancient-looking blue truck. He looks as wonderful as he did the day they met, his thick black locks falling across his forehead and his chocolatey eyes gleaming. She grins, almost sprinting as she heads back towards him. He pushes the door open and she climbs in.

"You're late," she says as he turns the truck around.

"I'm so sorry; I got held up at the florist. You – you look beautiful, by the way."

"Thanks." El's suddenly grateful for the dark car as she feels herself blush. "Why were you at the florist?"

Mike laughs, fiddling with the radio. "It's my sister's twenty-fifth birthday. She hates flowers."

"If she hates flowers, then why –"

"It's, um, a sibling thing. I guess you're an only kid?"

El nods. Mike takes a breath as if he wants to say more, but El's lack of elaboration seems to communicate to him that she doesn't want to talk about it.

"So...where are we going?" she says to break the loaded silence.

"You'll see." El can hear the smile in her voice so she tries not to worry about it.

They spend the hour-long drive talking and it gets easier the more they do. El learns that Mike works at a comic book store and spends his free time writing sci-fi stories and hosting Dungeons & Dragons sessions. She tells him about her major in Child Services and her passion for making sure kids get healthy families and good education and the love they deserve. Mike is surprised to find out that El loves classic rock just like him, so he turns the radio to the right station and they sing along at the top of their lungs (they both have terrible voices).

Shadows grow and shrink inside the truck as the streetlights whip past, growing few and far between the longer they drive. At some point they turn off the pavement and onto a bumpy dirt road, but when El raises an eyebrow at Mike, he just shrugs and asks her another question. It's so easygoing and comfortable that she forgets they haven't actually done whatever it is that Mike has planned for them, and for a moment she dreads stepping out of the truck when it comes to a stop. Of course, all her relief comes rushing back once Mike turns the truck off and says, "You ready?"

El nods and pushes open her door. The ground beneath her feet is hard-packed, and something scratchy brushes against her ankles. Illuminated by the bright white moon, an endless field of wheat stretches out all around them, the stalks rhythmically swaying back and forth in the slow breeze. The stars are so bright above El that she feels like she's stepped into an entirely different universe. She never knew she could fall in love with a place so quickly – this field, with its quiet rustling wheat and its glittering sky and its serenity and peace, has her utterly captivated.

Mike grabs a huge lump of stuff from the backseat and dumps it into the bed of the truck. After dropping the tailgate, he kicks off his

shoes and climbs in, spreading out a bunch of blankets and pillows.

“Okay, come on up.”

El tears her eyes away from the magnificently tranquil scene around her. She pulls off her shoes and climbs into the truck bed beside Mike. All the blankets make it warm against the cold of the night, and Mike encourages her to make herself comfortable.

“All right,” Mike says, checking his watch. “We’ve got about ten minutes, so I figured we could eat and talk before it starts.”

“Before *what* starts?” El asks, wrapped up in a thick quilt against the back of the truck.

Mike just gives her that annoying-slash-endearing grin and unzips his backpack, pulling things out as he names them. “So I’ve got several bags of chips, a box of chocolate-chip cookies, various fruits, and, um, a bottle of wine that I *borrowed* from my friend. I thought you would have already eaten dinner but if you want a meal, we can grab something on the way back in.”

El shakes her head, grabbing the box of cookies. “This is great. Wine, though? I didn’t peg you as a wine type of guy.”

Mike laughs. “I actually hate the stuff, but I brought it just in case you wanted some.”

“I’ve never really tried it.”

Mike takes a cookie and leans back. “Well, then we have at least one other thing on tonight’s agenda.” He’s sitting just a few maddening inches away from El, but once she notices, she realizes how crazy she’s being. *You barely know the guy, El. Get yourself under control. You’re not a love-struck fifth-grader.*

“So where’s your family all at?” she asks in an attempt to divert her attention away from their proximity. Instead, he turns to look at her to answer her question, and her focus just shoots from *he is very very close!!* to *LOOK AT HIS EYES OH MY GOD THEY’RE EVEN MORE GORGEOUS IN THE MOONLIGHT.*

“My parents split when I was fifteen,” Mike says, abruptly stopping El’s internal freak-out.

“Oh. Oh. Wow. That – that sucks, Mike. I’m really sorry.”

He waves a hand, brushing it off as he takes another cookie. “It’s fine. Really, we were all just waiting for it to happen. Plus, it was like six years ago. Anyways, me and my two sisters stayed with my mom. My dad...I think he went to Oregon. We haven’t talked in a while.”

“Where are your sisters?”

“Holly is way younger than me – she’s still with my mom in Hawkins. Nancy, though, she moved to New York with her two boyfriends when one of them got a scholarship to NYU. She loves it there.”

El vaguely wonders what New York is like – probably similar to Indianapolis or Chicago. She’s about to ask Mike what Nancy does there when he interrupts her, pointing at the sky. “There’s the first one.”

She looks up to the sky but doesn’t see anything out of the ordinary. “What are you talking about?”

“Wait. You’ll see them again in just a minute.”

She keeps her eyes trained upwards for two painfully long minutes. But finally, when she does see it, it takes her breath away. A meteor streaks across the black expanse like a shooting star, cutting through everything in its path and disappearing as quickly as it came.

“It’s a meteor shower,” she whispers. “You brought me to a meteor shower.”

“Yeah,” Mike says. She glances at him to see the biggest smile stretched across his face. “Kind of sappy, I know, but I – look, there’s more!”

El refuses to take her attention off the sky now. The meteors come slowly, only one or two every ten minutes, but then they build up quicker, shooting across the sky in gorgeous golden arcs. El can’t even begin to describe their beauty, each one so unique and shining

and quick against the starry black backdrop of the night. She's absolutely infatuated. It's like a symphony of light, and the only sounds El can hear is hers and Mike's breathing and the gentle sway of the wheat. It seems to last *forever*. At some point, El notices her eyes and cheeks are wet, but she doesn't care. She's never seen something so brilliant, so radiant – she never wants to leave.

Finally, after what feels like hours, she turns to look at Mike. He's staring at her, a faint smile pulling at the corner of his mouth. As the meteors shoot by, they light up in his eyes, making them gleam just as beautifully.

"You're missing it," she whispers, wiping her eyes.

"No. I'm not."

She's completely frozen in place as he leans towards her. In her periphery she can see the meteors still passing by, but when Mike kisses her, it doesn't matter anymore. His lips are soft and light and she finally moves, throwing off the quilt to wrap her arms around him and pull him closer. He tastes of cinnamon and chocolate, and it's so wonderful, so much better than any meteor or shooting star.

He leans back after a minute, eyes wide with *what did I just do?* "Was that – is that okay?"

She laughs, so amazed and fascinated with him. "Yes. Definitely okay."

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They stay out there under the stars for a long time. Mike makes her try the wine, which she promptly spits into the grass. They talk and laugh and El even opens up to him about her mother. The meteors slow down and eventually patter out to only one every once in a while, but El will forever have the memory of them rushing by in a gorgeous storm imprinted in her mind. Sometime around midnight, they finally put everything away and say goodbye to their little pocket of the universe.

The truck creaks to a halt at the campus lamppost, still giving off its hideous yellow-orange glow. El unbuckles and turns to Mike.



“Thank you for everything, Mike. I – I’ve never had a more fun time.”

Mike smiles at her. “Me neither. And I’m really sorry for being late. It won’t happen next time.”

“Next time?”

His smile immediately drops and he starts backtracking. “I mean – if you don’t want to – of course – we don’t –“

“I’d love to.”

“*Really?*”

She laughs. “Yes, really. Text me, okay?”

“I will. Night, El.”

“Good night, Mike.”

She squeezes his hand and then climbs out of the truck, quickly making her way across the green to her dorm building. When she reaches the door and looks back to the street, Mike’s still there. She waves to him, and he smiles at her and waves back, finally driving away. El sprints inside and up to her dorm, head and heart buzzing with excitement.

“Max!”

Max jumps up from her desk, hair plastered to one side of her face with drool. “I have *not* been sleeping. Where have you been?”

El grins. “You won’t believe it.”